Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties number: SM-517

Name: 18017/MD 238 OVER NELSON RUN

The bridge referenced herein was inventoried by the Maryland State Highway Administration as part of the Historic Bridge Inventory, and SHA provided the Trust with eligibility determinations in February 2001. The Trust accepted the Historic Bridge Inventory on April 3, 2001. The bridge received the following determination of eligibility.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

Eligibility Recommended _____ Eligibility Not Recommended __X____

Criteria: ____A ____B ____C ____D Considerations: ___A ___B ___C ___D ___E ___F ___G __None

Comments: _____

_____

_____

Reviewer, OPS: _Anne E. Bruder_____ Date: __3 April 2001____

Reviewer, NR Program: __Peter E. Kurtze_____ Date: __3 April 2001____

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC BRIDGES
HISTORIC BRIDGE INVENTORY
MARYLAND STATE HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION/
MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

MHT No. SM-517

SHA Bridge No. 18017 Bridge name MD 238 over Nelson Run

LOCATION:
Street/Road name and number [facility carried] MD 238

City/town Chaptico Vicinity X

County St. Mary's

This bridge projects over: Road____ Railway_____ Water X Land ____

Ownership: State X County _____ Municipal _____ Other _____

HISTORIC STATUS:
Is the bridge located within a designated historic district? Yes _____ No X
National Register-listed district ____ National Register-determined-eligible district __
Locally-designated district _____ Other _____

Name of district _____

BRIDGE TYPE:
Timber Bridge _____:
Beam Bridge _____ Truss -Covered ___ Trestle ____ Timber-And-Concrete ___

Stone Arch Bridge _____

Metal Truss Bridge _____

Movable Bridge _____:
Swing _____ Bascule Single Leaf __ Bascule Multiple Leaf _____
Vertical Lift _____ Retractile_____ Pontoon _____

Metal Girder_____:
Rolled Girder _____ Rolled Girder Concrete Encased _____
Plate Girder _____ Plate Girder Concrete Encased _____

Metal Suspension _____

Metal Arch _____

Metal Cantilever _____

Concrete X:
Concrete Arch_____ Concrete Slab X Concrete Beam ___ Rigid Frame _____
Other _____ Type Name _____

DESCRIPTION:

Setting: Urban _____ **Small town** _____ **Rural** X

Describe Setting:

Bridge No. 18017 carries MD 238 over Nelson Run in St. Mary's County. MD 238 runs north-south, while Nelson Run flows east to west. The area around the bridge is forested to the east, with fields to the northwest and a National Register-listed, brick church built in 1692 to the southwest.

Describe Superstructure and Substructure:

Bridge No. 18017 over Nelson Run is a single span concrete slab bridge built in 1929. The span length is 20', the total bridge length is 23', and the clear roadway width is 24' between the curbs. The superstructure, consisting of the slab and the roadway and the parapets, is in fair condition. Both deck fascias have a longitudinal cracks running from abutment to abutment. There is also fine cracking and heavy efflorescence along both sides. The 4" bituminous roadway surface is in good condition. State Highway Administration records report that the bridge and approaches were repaved in July 1995. The parapets were removed at an unknown date and replaced with standard W-beam guardrails. This missing element, and the lack of available information, has prevented the State Highway Administration from classifying this bridge as a standard plan. The bridge is not currently posted.

The substructure consists of the abutments and the wingwalls. The concrete abutments are 24'-6" wide and the concrete wingwalls are short, straight and covered with vegetation.

Discuss Major Alterations:

The concrete parapets were removed at an unknown date and replaced with w-beam guardrails.

HISTORY:

WHEN was the bridge built: 1929

This date is: Actual X **Estimated** _____

Source of date: Plaque _____ **Design plans** _____ **County bridge files/inspection form** X

Other (specify) _____

WHY was the bridge built?

Maryland's primary and secondary roads and bridges had become inadequate to the huge trucks and volume of cars in use after World War I.

WHO was the designer?

State Roads Commission

WHO was the builder?

State Roads Commission

WHY was the bridge altered?

The bridge was altered to accommodate increased safety precautions, therefore extending the bridge's useful life.

Was this bridge built as part of an organized bridge-building campaign?

Yes, post world War I improvements to primary and secondary roads.

SURVEYOR/HISTORIAN ANALYSIS:

This bridge may have National Register significance for its association with:

A - Events _____ **B- Person** _____

C- Engineering/architectural character _____

This bridge does not have National Register significance.

Was the bridge constructed in response to significant events in Maryland or local history?
Reinforced concrete slab bridges are a twentieth century structure type, easily adapted to the need for expedient engineering solutions. Reinforced concrete technology developed rapidly in the early twentieth century with early recognition of the potential for standardized design. The first U.S. attempt to standardize concrete design specifications came in 1903-1904 with the formation of the Joint Committee on Concrete and Reinforced Concrete of the American Society of Civil Engineers.

Maryland's roads and bridge improvement programs mirrored economic cycles. The first road improvement of the State Roads Commission was a 7 year program, starting with the Commissions establishment in 1908 and ending in 1915. Due to World War I, the period from 1916-1920 was one of relative inactivity; only roads of first priority were built. Truck traffic resulting from war related factories and military installations generated new, heavy traffic unanticipated by the builders of the early road system. From 1920-1929, numerous highway improvements occurred in response to the increase in Maryland motor vehicles from 103,000 in 1920 to 320,000 in 1929, with emphasis on the secondary system of feeder roads which moved traffic from the primary roads built before World War I. After World War I, Maryland's bridge system also was appraised as too narrow and structurally inadequate for the increasing traffic , with plans for an expanded bridge program to be handled by the Bridge Division, set up in 1920. In 1920 under Chapter 508 of the Acts of 1920 the State issued a bond of $3,000,000.00 for road construction; the primary purpose of these monies was to meet the state obligations involving the construction of rural post roads. The secondary purpose of these monies was to fund (with an equal sum from the counties) the building of lateral roads. the number of hard surfaced roads on the state system grew from 2000 in 1920 to 3200 in 1930. By 1930, Maryland's primary system had been inadequate to the huge freight trucks and volume of passenger cars in use. Most improvements to local roads waited until the years after World War II.

When the bridge was built and/or given a major alteration, did it have a significant impact on the growth and development of the area?
Although built during the post World War I construction phase, this bridge did not greatly effect the area surrounding it. The structure did not increase settlement or industry.

Is the bridge located in an area which may be eligible for historic designation and would the bridge add to or detract from the historic/visual character of the potential district?
No, this bridge is not located in an area which is eligible for historic designation.

Is the bridge a significant example of its type?
No, this structure is not a good example of its type.

Does the bridge retain integrity of important elements described in Context Addendum?
No, this structure does not retain the integrity of its original design because its character defining elements have been replaced.

Is the bridge a significant example of the work of a manufacturer, designer, and/or engineer and why?
No, this bridge is not a significant example of the work of the State Roads Commission.

Should the bridge be given further study before an evaluation of its significance is made?
No, this structure should not be given further study. Although it reflects the state's post war construction needs of expanding secondary roads system, its current condition has placed its integrity in doubt.

SM-517

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

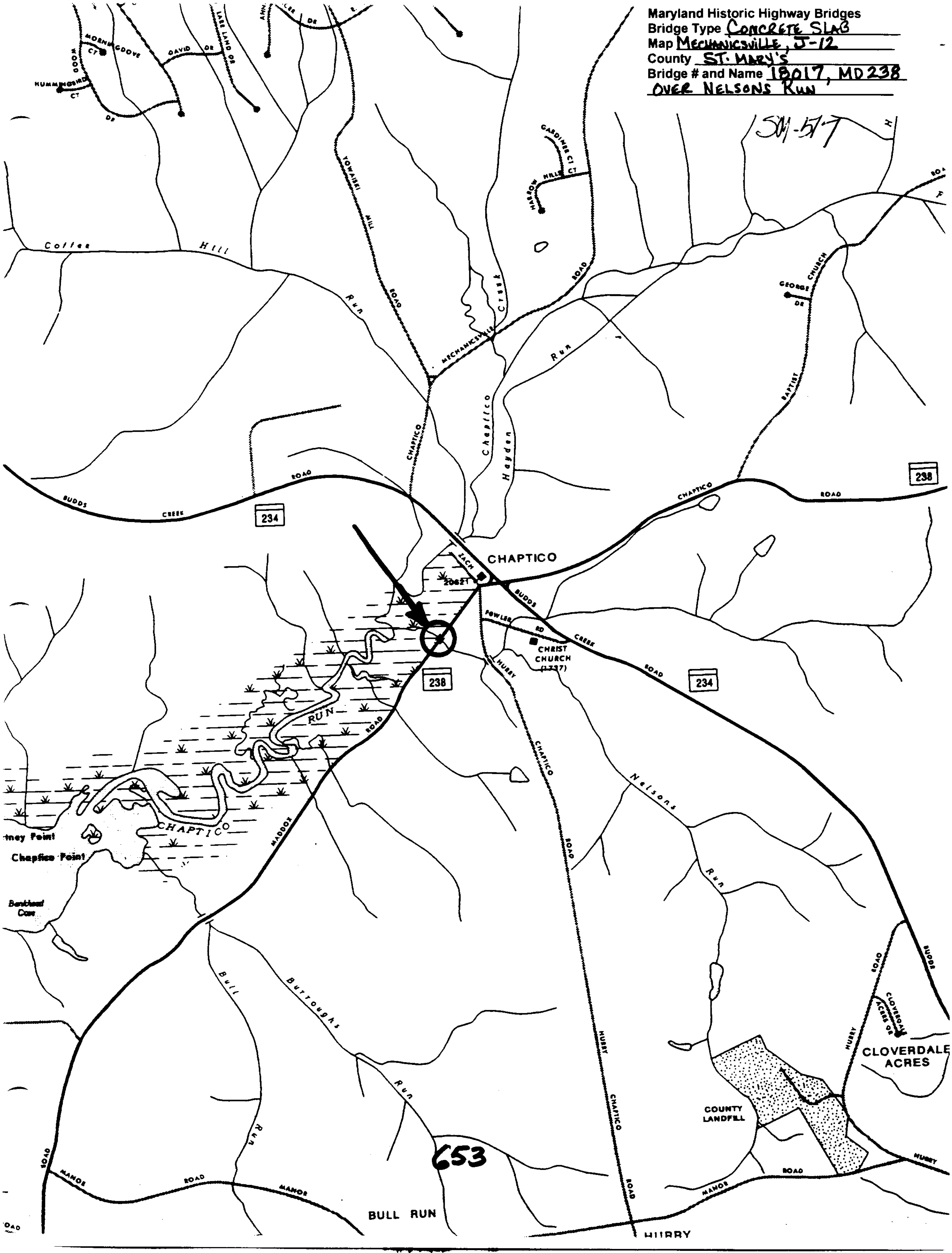
County inspection/bridge files _____ **SHA inspection/bridge files** X
Other (list):

SURVEYOR:

Date bridge recorded 8/11/95
Name of surveyor Timothy J. Tamburrino
Organization Address P.A.C. Spero & Company,40 W. Chesapeake Avenue,Suite 412,Baltimore, Maryland 21204
Phone number 410-296-1635 **FAX number** 410-296-1670

Maryland Historic Highway Bridges
Bridge Type CONCRETE SLAB
Map MECHANICSVILLE, J-12
County ST. MARY'S
Bridge # and Name 18017, MD 238 OVER NELSONS RUN

SM-517



SM-517 1 OF 4

ST MARYS COUNTY

D. BHAUMIK

2-1-95

MARYLAND SHPO

MD 238 OVER NELSONS RUN

LOOKING SOUTH ON MD 238

(BRIDGE 18017)


18017

SM-517

2 OF 4

ST MARYS COUNTY

D. BRAUNIK

2-1-95

MARYLAND SHPO SHA

MD 238 OVER NELSONS RUN

LOOKING WEST (UPSTREAM FACE)

(BRIDGE 15017)

SM-517 3 OF 4

ST MARYS COUNTY

D. BRAUNIK

2-1-95

MARYLAND SHPO

MD 238 OVER NELSONS RUN

LOOKING EAST (DOWNSTREAM SIDE)

(BRIDGE 15017)

4 OF 4

SM-F17

ST MARYS COUNTY
D. BLAUM'K
2-1-95
MARYLAND SHPO SHA
MD 238 OVER NELSONS RUN
LOOKING NORTH ON MD 238
(BRIDGE 18017)